



Coalition

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Mosul celebrates International Women's Day for first time



Spc. Christy White, civil affairs specialist, poses for a picture with two of her new Iraqi friends at the International Women's Day Conference in Mosul.

Story and photo by
Spc. Jessika Ross
139th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

MOSUL — For the first time in history, women in Mosul were able to join the world in celebrating International Women's Day.

International Women's Day, serves as a day to recognize the efforts of women everywhere for equal rights and political and economic equality.

Herro Mustafa, the Coalition Provisional Authority Coordinator for Ninevah Province, spoke to more than 150 Iraqi women and female Soldiers of the U.S. Army about the role of women in Iraq.

"International Women's Day is a time to reflect on progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of

women's rights. "Today, we are celebrating the story of Iraqi women for all the past, current and future work they have done to build a new Iraq," Mustafa said.

The conference highlighted women working in all levels of the new Iraqi government and the work they have been doing to establish a foundation for women's rights.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the People's Assembly Building was rededicated as the Center for Iraqi Women.

The center will serve as a meeting place for all women of Iraq, where they can share ideas, offer training, coordinate communication and build a safer homeland, said Mustafa.

"The women I met and worked with in Iraq are strong, intelligent, wise beyond their years, resourceful and willing to work for the future of everyone," Mustafa said.



Photo by 1st Lt. Douglas McGowan

Marine War Dawgs replace Army Thunder Squadron

In a formal Transfer of Authority ceremony, 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment officially took control of Forward Operating Base Thunder, Tikrit, from the Army's 3rd Battalion, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

Inside this week ...

Iraqi PLDC course complete

Iraqi Civil Defense Corps soldiers become leaders after graduation.

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Bridge lifted from the depths

British engineers and local Iraqis work to fix the broken Basrah bridge.

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Operation Starfish helps the children

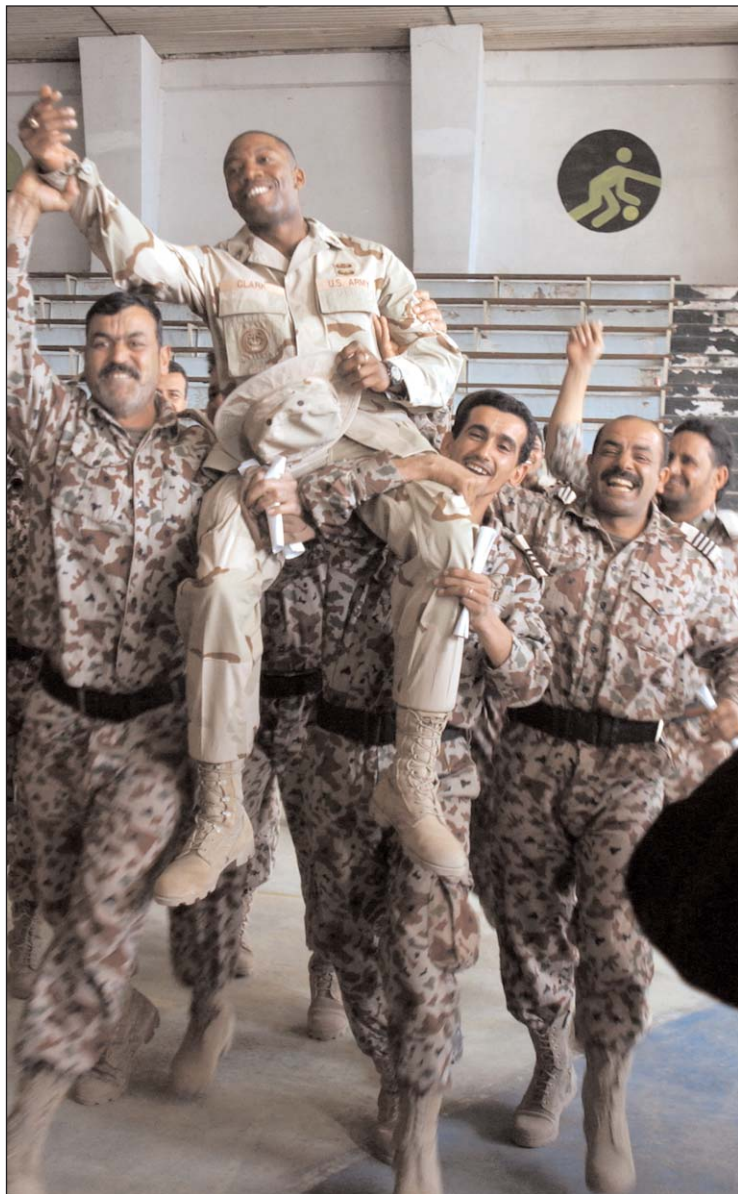
Airman starts charitable program and it becomes bigger than he expected.

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Round two has just begun

Marines return to Iraq for the second phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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Iraqi Civil Defense Corps soldiers celebrate the completion of the inaugural Primary Leadership Development Course with one of their instructors, Drill Sergeant Staff Sgt. Carlos Clark.



The newly graduated non-commissioned officers swear in at their Primary Leadership Development Course graduation. This class was the first PLDC in Iraq conducted by the United States Army. The soldiers will be the leaders now.

Class work complete, ICDC NCOs ready to lead

Story and photos by
Sgt. Susan German
122nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Civil Defense Corps officially welcomed its non-commissioned officer “backbone” during graduation ceremonies for the first Primary Leadership Development Course.

The NCOs completed the first PLDC conducted in Iraq by the United States Army.

The ceremony, held at Camp Muleskinner, which is home to the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment’s Support Squadron. The regiment is part of Task Force 1st Armored Division.

One hundred sixteen ICDC soldiers participated in the historic ceremony. The program followed the U.S. Army’s traditional ceremonial sequence of events.

It began with the arrival of the official party, which included members of the cadre, as well as guest speaker Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Bush, 1st Armored Division command sergeant major.

Following the national anthems of the United States and Iraq, the new non-commissioned officers recited the Iraqi NCO creed and charge in their native language.

“You are the history makers of this great country,” Bush told the Iraqi NCOs.

He and Master Sgt. Johnny McKenzie, the NCO academy commandant, presented diplomas to the soldiers. As they walked through the receiving line, their chevrons were “wetted down,” following an NCO tradition.

Fifteen Training and Doctrine Command drill sergeants from Fort Sill, Okla., led the trainees through a 113-hour program of instruction. The course focused on six areas: leadership, communication skills, maintenance, professional skills, military training and military studies. Emphasis was placed on leadership and professional skills.

Following a strict training schedule, the Iraqi soldiers practiced drill and ceremony and conducted physical training during the two-week course. Every classroom had an interpreter and instructional slides were presented in both English and Arabic. Soldiers were required to take a written exam and also received periodic counseling to evaluate progress.

The initial course was opened up to soldiers serving in senior leadership positions such as platoon sergeant through sergeant major. Attendees were recommended for the course by their U.S. Army partners. Most served in leadership positions to prepare them for attendance in the class. Medical screening and background checks were

conducted before soldiers reported for class.

“The general theme of the course was “BE, KNOW, DO.” Three simple words that the (Iraqi) Soldiers could speak, are easy to remember and when you apply the concept to the NCO corps, that’s what we expect,” said Sgt. Maj. David Davenport, the 1AD operations section sergeant major (G3).

The drill sergeants said they were pleased with the progress made by their students. They learned basic commands in Arabic, but depended on interpreters to relay their messages. Staff Sgt. Richard George, drill sergeant, said the way the cadre ensured that commands were understood correctly was through the repetition of every task.

The respect that the ICDC soldiers had for their instructors became evident during the post-ceremony celebrations. The new NCOs hoisted their drill sergeants onto their shoulders while chanting traditional Iraqi cheers and songs as they carried them around the hall.

The ceremony marked a new beginning for the NCOs and their country as they assumed leadership positions in their nation’s defense, Davenport said.

“I’m very excited about it,” Davenport said. “They’re very eager to assume their new role.”

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Unsung Heroes

Marching the extra mile across Iraq



Pfc. Contes

Pfc. Thanisha R. Contes, an animal care specialist, is assigned to the 248th Medical Detachment out of Fort Bragg, N.C.

She transferred from the Army Reserve into active duty. She has been in active duty for one year.

Contes has been in Iraq for one month. She says she joined because she wanted to work closely with animal.

"Maj. Scott D. Bormanis, detachment commander, said "she is one of the most motivated (medics) I've ever worked with. She finds our customers and makes sure they know we are here to support them.



Pvt. Anderson

Pvt. John R. Anderson, 22, is a member of 1st Armored Division, B Company, 40th Engineer Battalion. He has been in the army for over one year.

He said joined for the educational benefits and to start a family. Anderson, from The Dalles, Ore., has been married for two and a half years.

Anderson arrived in country in December. He works at checkpoint 18 and ensures there are no explosives or improvised explosive devices inside the checkpoint.

Sgt. Brian L. Olmstead, section leader, said "he's a hard working dedicated Soldier, he's done a great job."



Spc. Mapstead

Spc. Thomas C. Mapstead has been in the Army for four years. A Riverside, Calif. native, he has been in Iraq for almost a year.

Mapstead, 24, plans to attend college when he finishes his enlistment. He is a member of the 1st Armored Division, B Company, 40th Engineer Battalion.

His main duty here is to guard checkpoint 18 and make sure that all incoming vehicles are inspected. He controls traffic and makes sure no one comes into the green zone with weapons and explosives.

"He's a valuable asset for checkpoint operations," said Sgt. Brian L. Olmstead, section leader. "He is a very intelligent Soldier and has been here the full year."



Spc. Clemens

Spc. Heather S. Clemens, Springfield, Ohio, has been in Iraq for over two weeks now. She spent over a month in Kuwait prior to her arrival here. She is an Ohio National Guard Soldier assigned to Charlie 118 Area Support Medical Battalion.

Clemens, 20, was a freshman at Ohio State University before the deployment. Her area of study was Anthropology.

Clemens assesses patients and treats them. She works in the Troop Medical Clinic in the Palace.

"She's a hard worker, dedicated to her profession and she boasts morale," said Sgt. Kenneth P. Mlynarek, noncommissioned officer-in-charge. "She has been nice to have along and is a blessing to have."

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welcomes units to submit
their own Unsung Heros.
Photos and short summaries
of accomplishments should
be sent to
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Photo by Cpl. Gary Wort, Royal Air Force

Above: An Iraqi worker helps build a pontoon for the bridge. The project, run by British military engineers, employs many local Iraqis.

Cullingworth Bridge raised from depths

Story by Jonathan Turner
Information Officer MND (SE)

BASRAH — British military engineers and Iraqi contractors are salvaging a sunken bridge from the bottom of the Shatt-al-Arab River in Basrah.

The Cullingworth Bridge was badly damaged, Dec. 29, after a heavy truck drove over it and sank one of the floats which kept it in position.

As the floats began to flood one by one, British engineers had to separate the damaged part of the bridge with explosives in order to save the rest of it.

Over the last few months they have continued to salvage the sunken parts to repair the bridge, which they said they hope will be open again by the end of the month.

Maj. Matt Quare, who is commanding the engineers doing the work, said the troops had searched the country for spare parts to repair the missing section.

Quare said, "some of my soldiers went to Baghdad to get parts for the bridge, and we are paying local Iraqis to build new pontoons."

He added, "they have been working very quickly and we are very impressed with the quality of the work they have done."

Military divers attached chains to the sunken pontoons so they could be winched to the surface by a crane and pulled out of the water. The parts will be used to repair the missing section over the next few weeks.

Meanwhile, the remaining section of the bridge has been strengthened to prevent it from being torn away by the Shatt-al-Arab's strong current.

"This is the third time we have repaired this bridge," Maj. Quare said. "In the future, we will put measures in place to prevent heavy trucks from crossing it."

"The Iraqi Police will also make sure that any vehicle which goes across is not too heavy. If the bridge is damaged again, it will be very hard to repair," he added.



Photo by Cpl. Gary Wort, Royal Air Force

Above: British military engineers work on the sunken bridge. They are responsible for fixing the bridge and get the parts they need in Baghdad.



Photo by Cpl. Gary Wort, Royal Air Force

Left: The British military engineers work on one of the sections of the bridge that sunk in the Shatt-al-Arab River. The Cullinworth Bridge was badly damaged after a heavy truck drove over it in late December.

Friday's Fun Facts

Gator knowledge to swallow



- Transparent third eyelid gives underwater protection.
- 80 teeth; 40 top, 40 bottom
- Teeth are conical; used for grabbing and holding, not for cutting.
- Young alligators can replace teeth every year or so.
- Mother 'gators' will care for their young for up to two years.
- Use feet to swim slow and to keep balance in water; use tail to swim fast
- Average growth is one foot per year for the first six years.
- The alligator cannot chew, so they swallow their food whole or in chunks
- The longest alligator ever found was 19' 2". This animal was trapped in the early 1900's in Louisiana
- The strength of its jaw, when closing, is roughly 2,000 lbs of pressure
- Alligators are not an endangered species but they are legally protected.
- Alligators can live 35 to 50 years in the wild. In captivity, 60 to 80 years.

Al Fayha School celebrates completed renovations

Story and photo by Spc. Gretel Sharpee
139th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MOSUL — The children enrolled at the Al Fayha School in eastern Mosul smiled, danced and clapped as they celebrated the completion of their school's needed renovation with visitors from Task Force Olympia who played a role in organizing the renovations at Al Fayha.

Yazi Sulaiman, Al Fayha's headmaster, said the students are pleased with their new surroundings and that even though there have been many new people from the Coalition forces around, they have worked hard and done well on their latest exams.

"This [having Coalition forces Soldiers in the school] has taught my students not to be afraid of the Americans that they see in the street," said Sulaiman. "They can see that the Americans are trying to help us, and they are excited to learn at their new school."

One school at a time, the Coalition forces of Task Force Olympia are working with Iraqi citizens to create a strong education system by building and renovating old school buildings in and around the Mosul area. A strong education system is a critical piece of the free and democratic society that Iraq is moving towards. The Al Fayha School is the first of five school remodeling projects in the eastern Mosul area that the 445th Civil Affairs Battalion from Mountain View, Calif. has identified.

Members of the U.S. Army's 445th Civil Affairs Battalion representing Task Force Olympia attended the ceremony at the Al Fayha School. Task Force Olympia is the command and control element for the Multi-National Brigade North.

In the ceremony, Maj. Larry L. Ogg, a Civil Affairs officer for 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) and Capt. A.J. Newston, commander of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, cut the ribbon marking the completion of the renovation project.

"One of our concerns is rebuilding the education system, from the bottom up, in Iraq," said Ogg. "Our mission is to help rebuild Iraq, working with



Maj. Larry L. Ogg, civil affairs officer and Capt. A.J. Newston, commander of Company C, 2-3 Infantry, wait to enter the newly renovated Al Fayha School as a student carries the scissors used for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

the citizens to prepare them for our departure."

The goal of the Coalition forces is turning over total control and management of the country to the Iraqi government.

In his role as a Civil Affairs officer, Ogg works with local citizens to identify schools that would most benefit from remodeling. After a selection is made, it is approved by Task Force Olympia and a local contractor is selected to accomplish the work.

Ogg said that the plans to continue remodeling schools in Mosul focus on improving each building's appearance, electrical system, and sanitary conditions, so that children will have pride in where they go to learn everyday.

The Al Fayha School was built in 1980 and has not had any significant maintenance until the renovation started last month. It is a primary school, grades 1-6, with almost 700 students and 21 teachers. Girls attend in the morning and boys attend in the afternoon.

Task Force Olympia continues to work with the citizens and leaders of Iraq to make it a safe, prosperous, and democratic nation



Marine Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Walters, FX noncommissioned officer-in-charge, CJTF 7, speaks with hall-of-famer Deacon Jones. Walters was among a small crowd of people that welcomed nine football players and coaches.

Hall of Famers are 'big hit'

Story and photo by
Marine Cpl. Anthony Pike
Coalition Press
Information Center

BAGHDAD — A small crowd welcomed nine football hall-of-famers to the 'Water Palace' at Camp Victory.

The players and coaches arrived in Iraq late in the day but still pushed on and signed autographs and posed for pictures with the small gathering of servicemembers that were in attendance.

The servicemembers who were at the 'Water Palace' and waited for the football stars to arrive felt a sense of gratitude to the players who made the long trip from the states.

"To see Bud Grant and some of the other players is amazing," said Pvt. Jeremy Chambliss, network systems switch operator, Coalition Joint Task Force 7. "It's a good thing that these guys are coming out here and showing their appreciation. It's a morale booster, its not often you get to meet hall-of-famers," said the 21 year-old from Crosby, Minn.

Other servicemembers came out to take the opportunity to meet some of the players they watched while they grew up.

"I came out here to meet these guys," said Marine Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Walters, operations, CJTF 7. "It was really football when these guys were playing." Walters had the chance to meet and talk to Deacon Jones, Jones was inducted to the football Hall of Fame in 1980.

Once the football players and coaches were invited to Iraq several knew they had to come and meet the people they see on tele-

vision everyday.

"When I was asked to come out here I knew I had to do it," said Jerry Glanville, football Hall of Fame. "I am an American and I knew I had to do this for these guys. I respect these servicemembers for giving so much of themselves. I wanted to do something for them."

Along with signing autographs and joking with the small crowd, Glanville brought messages to all people serving in Iraq.

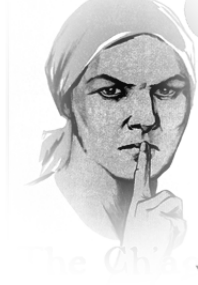
"The biggest thing from home is that everybody is praying for you everyday," he said. "They all remember that out here it is easy to get into harms way, and everyone back home wants you all to come home safe."

One family who knew of Glanville's trip to Iraq approached him and asked him to bring a special gift to servicemembers in Iraq. He agreed and carried a bag of lifesavers, each wrapped with a little prayer, across the world to share with the servicemembers he met here.

"I was able to give out the candy today on the plane in from Kuwait," said Glanville. "As each person took theirs and opened it to eat the candy, they read the little prayer and each one of them quietly stuck it inside their helmets. I have coached for over 31 years, and flying in here today was better than any one of those games, even the play-offs. I thought about that the whole way flying in here today."

Other football players to make the journey were; Jim Breech, Larry Schreiber, Matt Blair, Mickey Fitzgerald, Randy Gradishar and Ray Caroline.

Shhhh!



Operational Security...

OPSEC

Keep cell phone and
email commo free of
sensitive information.

You don't know who's listening.

Iraqi Armed Forces celebrate opening of new training facility

Story and photo by
Spc. Autumn Grimsley
139th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

MOSUL — An Iraqi flag waves freely in the breeze over the Battalion of Iraqi Armed Forces standing at attention. With crisp precision, the entire Battalion renders the proper salute as the Iraqi national anthem is played. A ribbon is cut symbolizing the opening of Tall Afar Castle, where soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, Iraqi Armed Forces will live, train and provide security in the northwestern region of the country.

The ceremony marked the official opening of Tall Afar Castle.

"The opening will not only bring heightened security and an increased number of armed forces, it will bring jobs and economic stability to the area," said Col. Jahwar Rasheed Abdullah, deputy commander of the 3rd Battalion.

He added that "it is important to protect our nation and our country. From Tall Afar Castle, soldiers will be easily deployed throughout the area to provide security," he said.

Increased security in all regions of Northern Iraq will continue to be of vital importance as attacks on Iraqi citizens and security forces continue.

"Our enemies are those who come here to attack my Army, civilians and Coalition forces," said Abdullah. He explained that while it is still dangerous here, each day the safety and security is increasing and the large number of Iraqi Armed Forces in the area will assist in the ongoing protection of the local communities.

"We want our soldiers to do their best in their duties," said Master Sgt.



Col. Jahwar Rasheed Abdullah, deputy commander, 3rd Battalion Iraqi Armed Forces and Brig. Gen. Carter Ham, commander, Task Force Olympia, cut the ribbon for the opening of Tall Afar Castle. The 3rd Battalion will be headquartered at Tall Afar.

Ali Hamwood Ali, supply sergeant for the Battalion. "In the old regime, we worked for Saddam. Now we work for the new Iraqi Government." He said it was important to keep freedom in the new government, because there was no freedom before.

In cooperation with the Iraqi people, Coalition forces assist in the rebuilding of the infrastructure in Iraq.

Ali said the soldiers, local contractors and Coalition forces have worked together over the last two months preparing Tall Afar Castle for opening.

"You couldn't work with better people. They really want to do a good job. They want to make their homeland better and they understand this concept of teamwork that is shared not

just within Iraq, but with all the people trying to help Iraq become a better nation," said Col. Todd Ebel, a special projects officer for Task Force Olympia. The Task Force is a command and control element of Multinational Brigade – North.

Ebel explained that with the help of local contractors, many of the changes that had to be made before the opening of Tall Afar Castle were completed. Local contractors will also provide assistance in maintaining the facility.

"Tall Afar is located in the Ninevah region on the major highway that runs from Mosul to the Syrian border. The location is significant in providing security and monitoring the transfer of goods from Syria into Iraq," said Ebel.

In order for the facility to be useful

to the Iraqi Armed Forces, major clean up and renovations had to be done, Ebel said. He explained the facility was in terrible condition the first time he visited. "There was trash everywhere, it was not an environment for soldiers to live in," he said.

Maj. David Kesterson, facility commander during the renovations, agreed that when renovations first started, the facility appeared to be in almost irreparable condition.

"When the project first started, there was no electricity, water, heating or plumbing. Now all of these things have been restored," said Kesterson, who is also commander of the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team. The team has been working with the Iraqi Armed Forces to train them to provide security for Northwestern Iraq.

The Coalition forces are working closely with the Iraqi people to return the government and the management of the country back to the people of Iraq through projects intended to bring growth to Iraq's economy and repair its infrastructure.

"Anytime Coalition forces work side by side with the people of Iraq, we become a small family. We often discuss such topics as our families with each other," Ebel said. "The cooperation between the soldiers and the local Iraqis has been monumental."

The opening of Tall Afar Castle is another step forward in helping to provide security for Iraq. Having the 3rd Battalion of Iraqi Armed Forces in the Ninevah Province will increase the level of security and safety in the region. The numbers of the Iraqi Armed Forces soldiers will continue to increase as other Iraqi military facilities are completed.

Kirkuk Airbase Chapel Schedule

FRIDAY

5 a.m., 7 p.m. — Islamic Prayer
9 a.m. — Catholic Mass (Sky Soldier Chapel)

SATURDAY

7 p.m. — Catholic Mass

SUNDAY

8 a.m. — Gospel Service
9 a.m. — Catholic Mass (Sky Soldier Chapel)

10 a.m. — General Protestant

11:30 a.m. — Catholic Mass

1 p.m. — Latter-Day Saints

2 p.m. — Catholic Mass (Sky Soldier Chapel)

7 p.m. — Protestant Service

TUESDAY

6:30 p.m. — Growing as a Christian:
Studying the Book of James

WEDNESDAY

8 a.m. — The Bible in Light of Current History and Local Events

5:30 p.m. — Building Your Faith:
Studying the Book of Hebrews

*All services are held at the Ten Days From Tomorrow Chapel unless otherwise noted. Times subject to change. Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and others should contact chapel administration for updates of their religious requirements and support.



Members of the 118th Medical Battalion unveil Camp Victory's brand new troop medical center, the Christopher Allen Golby Clinic, March 8th.

New TMC offers big improvement at Victory

Story and photos by
Sgt. Brianne Pippin
III Corps Public
Affairs Office

With a quiet ceremony outside the new facility, National Guardsmen from Co. C., 118th Medical Battalion, based out of Westerville, Ohio proudly unveiled Camp Victory's brand new troop medical center, the Christopher Allen Golby Clinic, March 8.

"The new building is a big improvement over the [previous] TMC," said 2nd Lt. David Kiesen, Co. C. 118th Med. Bn., who, as the clinic's officer-in-charge, was responsible for overseeing the TMC's move.

Formally located in the special troops battalion, the victory south TMC was almost con-

cealed among other offices, and with the huge volume of patients coming in and out, quarters were cramped for patients and staff.

"Not only was the facility cramped but the layout was confusing and only four beds were available for patient holds," said Kiesen.

The new facility, located across the street from AAFES post exchange, currently has six beds for patients holds, and will be able to accommodate 20 once the trailers arrive, explained Maj William Turton, commander, Co. C. 118th Med. Bn.

The Golby clinic will continue to offer sick call, pharmacy, mental health, lab, x-ray, dental, and 24-hour a day ambulance support for the camp, just in an improved facility, explained Kiesen.

Even before the new clinic was open, they were already seeing patients. The night prior to the opening, the movement of equipment also included the movement of two patients, explained Turton. We were also open bright and early for sick call.

While this ceremony marked the official opening of the TMC, an official dedication ceremony has yet to be held, where a plaque will be placed, honoring the facility's namesake, a medic from the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment who died during a mission when the Blackhawk he was flying in went down.

While all the major construction is done on the new facility, "we will continue to grow to meet the needs of Camp Victory," explained Turton.

Iraq in Brief

Mosul police thank coalition forces for assistance

MOSUL - Iraqi policemen in Mosul met with soldiers from the U.S. Army's 503rd Military Police Battalion Wednesday to thank them for their assistance in providing security and stability in Northern Iraq over the past year.

"We walked hand in hand for one year to rebuild police stations in Mosul," said Mohammed Barhowie, who is the police chief in Mosul. He explained that they were very proud of the coalition forces that helped renovate several police stations and enabled the police officers to protect their fellow citizens.

"We want to increase the number of policemen and work hard in perfecting our police stations," Barhowie said. Coalition forces started a police-training program that includes a three-week course for current police officers and an eight-week course for new recruits. In the past year, 4,570 police, corrections specialists and firefighters from the Ninevah Province have completed the training.

Barhowie said the police are better prepared to maintain security for the people of Iraq because of the training the coalition forces provided.

Ikraa School opens with help of Coalition forces

MOSUL - In an effort to advance and improve the educational infrastructure, members of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) officially opened the newly refurbished Ikraa School Wednesday, making it the second school to reopen within a week.

"It means a lot to the students and the citizens of this neighborhood to improve the beauty of a school," said Headmaster Mahmud Muhamid Rasheed at the school's ceremonial opening.

The 1,000-student elementary school, located in southeastern Mosul, underwent extensive repairs to give the students a safer learning environment.

Before the repairs were made, insufficient lighting and ventilation hampered the students' learning while broken glass littered the classrooms and hallways, said Maj. Larry L. Ogg, a civil affairs officer in the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team).

The repairs included installing new ceiling fans, lights, doors, tile and windows in the classrooms. Other renovations included repairing the inoperable bathrooms and washbasins and applying a fresh coat of paint to the walls.

"Our number one priority is education. Inside these walls are future presidents and leaders. They are the future of Iraq," said Ogg.

Stryker Brigade detains nine, collects weapons, foils power line sabotage

MOSUL - Soldiers from 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) under the operational control of Task Force Olympia detained personnel suspected of anti-Coalition activities and conducted ongoing weapons collection operations in Northern Iraq.

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment apprehended nine people suspected of anti-Coalition activities, including three targets suspected of involvement in planning attacks on Coalition forces during a series of operations conducted early Wednesday morning.

Members of the Coalition for Iraqi Unity, a concerned group of citizens in Northwestern Iraq, approached 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment near Sinjar and turned in four rocket-propelled grenade launchers, three RPG sights, 60 37mm High Explosive tracer rounds, 133 60mm mortar rounds, 167 82mm mortar rounds, 28 120mm mortar rounds, 12 rifle smoke grenades, six 115mm rounds, 18 100 mm rounds and 2100 14.5mm rounds.

Another concerned Iraqi citizen in Rabiya approached 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment Soldiers and turned in 726 rifle grenades, 182 hand grenades and 52 60mm mortar rounds.

A concerned group of citizens turned in weapons to 1st Squadron 14th Cavalry Regiment headquarters in Tall Afar. It consisted of 112 90mm recoilless rifle rounds, 26 mortar rounds, 1 60mm complete mortar system, 50 hand grenade fuses, 40 hand grenades, 3 57mm rockets, 1 68mm rocket, 2 81mm mortar rounds, 5 100mm artillery rounds and 4 boxes of 14.5mm rounds.

Anyone with information about criminal or terrorist activities should inform the Iraqi Police, Coalition Forces, or call the Tips Hotline 813-343 or 780-013.

"It is a mistake to try to look too far ahead. The chain of destiny can only be grasped one link at a time."

Sir Winston Churchill

Twilight of Tyranny



Photo by Gunnery Sgt. Erik S. Hansen

Above: 1st Marine Division units convoy north on Highway 80 towards Baghdad March 24 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Top Right: A statue of former dictator Saddam Hussein is pulled down by coalition troops in Baghdad during Operation Iraqi Freedom, a multinational coalition effort to liberate the Iraqi people.



Photo by AP/ Wide World Photo/ Laurent Rebours



Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Steven Pearsall

Middle Right: Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, commander, Combined Joint Task Force 7, and Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, Coalition Provisional Authority Administrator, speak the media during a press conference at the Iraqi Forum in Baghdad, Dec. 14, 2003, discussing the capture of Saddam Hussein by coalition forces in Tikrit, Iraq, Dec. 13, 2003.

Right: A member of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Battalion 327th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), calms a small child with an offering of dried bananas during a mass air assault and raid on a village in search of weapons and smugglers near Qayyarah West, Iraq on Nov. 19, 2003 during Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Photo by Army SGT Justin Harris

Dawn of peace

“ Twelve months have passed since Coalition Forces came to Iraq to liberate the people of this historic country. During this past year, the people of Iraq have been freed from the pall, oppression and horror, of the cruel dictator, Saddam Hussein, and his tyrannical regime of henchmen that ruled this land for more than 35 years.

During this year, this newly freed country and its people, represented by the Iraqi Governing Council, signed a new constitution declaring liberty and establishing human civil rights where they have previously been denied. Also during this year, Iraqi Security Forces recruited and now count among their ranks more than 200,000 free soldiers, who stand prepared to defend the rights of Iraqi citizens. Now, each day, schools open for the children of Iraq, where they may learn about the rich history of their homeland and the bright future that is theirs to command.

Each day, in countless ways, we see a country and its people, reviving, revitalizing, and emerging from their darkness. Steadied by the help of their Coalition partners, the Iraqi people are preparing to take their place in the world community of free and democratic nations, and free people. But this kind of change did not come easily. The tragedy of the human cost can never be ignored.

In this way, this first anniversary is more than just a simple mark in the passage of time and events. It is a joyous time and a solemn time. It is a time for both commemoration and celebration.

We commemorate sacrifice.

Iraq has been reborn through the strain, tears, blood and lives, of those who wear the uniform, and stand fast for freedom in a land that is not our own. Across the desert sands, and through our collective loss, we have not faltered. Through it, we have not failed. We have persevered, and now the Coalition can proudly point to a free Iraq, an emerging Iraq, as evidence of this commitment and sacrifice.

This anniversary is also a celebration. It is a celebration of those same lives, whose dedication to duty and commitment to freedom served as examples, and spurred us to push steadily towards our goals.

It is a celebration of the future of liberty, and the promise of peace. It is a celebration for the freedom loving citizens of Iraq, who reached out to their international community, as well as for those who left their homes and families to answer their call.

As the Commanding General of CJTF-7, each day I am humbled by the caliber of individuals and organizations in the Coalition I have been appointed to lead. No finer collection of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines from around our Globe, have ever come together to support such noble a cause. Each day I hear of new efforts, new accomplishments and new reasons to be proud of who we are, and what we have accomplished.

In sum, this year, your efforts freed a nation, and instituted a tempo of change never before witnessed by man. Your affiliation with this cause and accomplishment is something of which you can celebrate, commemorate and be forever proud.

As we mark this anniversary, remember that it is an Anniversary for all that is Iraq— the Iraqi people, The Coalition, the Global community, and most of all, the bright promise of tomorrow that flourishes wherever liberty, democracy and freedom reign. ”

Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez

Combined Joint Task Force 7 commander



Photo by Army Spc. Jeffrey Hillery



Photo by Army Pfc. Chris Jones

Above: Thousands of gallons of water stream through a dam at the Al Jezeera Pump Station near the Syrian border in a ceremony celebrating the completion of the third stage in a project designed by Coalition Forces to replenish water supply in Northern Iraq.

Top Right: Members of the Iraqi Governing Council sign the Transitional Authoritative Law at the Baghdad Forum on March 8, 2004.

Bottom Left: Iraqi Civil Defense Corps soldiers proudly march away from a transfer-of-authority ceremony in Baghdad with their new guidon, which the ICDC company designed. These Iraqi soldiers work with the 2nd Battalion, 70th Armored Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, in the Abu Ghraib area of western Baghdad, Iraq.



Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Conrad College

Military women making history today

MG Fast, top woman in Iraq

By Sgt. Brianne Pippin
III Corps Public
Affairs Office

Meeting with Iraqi dignitaries, congressional delegations and scouring over intelligence reports gathered from across the region, is all in a day's work for the highest ranking woman in the theatre.

As the C-2 for the Coalition Joint Task Force- 7, Maj. Gen. Barbara Fast is responsible for all intelligence support operations and intelligence operations in Iraq.

"We play an important role in setting the conditions for a new Iraqi government as well as [building] a safe a secure environment," she explained about the role of intelligence in Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

As the daughter of a retired Air Force Chief Master

Sergeant, and a mother who also briefly served, it would have been natural to follow in the footsteps of her parents, but Fast said she had no interest in military service until she graduated from the University of Missouri.

"I had no intention of going into the military, but after I earned my degree, I realized I wasn't going to make any money with a degree in Spanish and German," said Fast. "I got teased a lot from friends and family for choosing the Army, but I felt the opportunities in the Army were better for women. Despite all their teasing, they were very supportive of my decision."

In January 1976, Fast, 22 at the time, joined the Women's Army Corps. Because she had a degree, she was commissioned as an intelligence officer through the direct commission program.

While growing up in an Air Force household did nothing to effect her decision to join the military, it certainly affected her perception of the Army.

"I had no idea what being in the Army was going to be like," said Fast, who envisioned an Army that more closely resembled the gentlemen's service her parents had served in. "The environment and things like going to the field were unexpected, but it was terrific. I enjoyed it from the get-go ... but I had no desire to make a career out of the Army, two years and I was out the door."

It only took two years for Fast to change her mind.

"Within in the first two years, I decided this was something I truly enjoyed, plus I met my husband and we both made a commitment to stay in together," said Fast, whose husband is now a

retired Lt. Col.

For Fast, her only goal in her military career was to be a battalion commander and retire as a Lt. Col.

"I never really thought about much after that," said explained. "Earning my [first star] was a very humbling experience. I had so many friends and coworkers that could have easily been in my place. You realize there's no other career like the military where it's close knit, where it really takes everyone pulling together to achieve goals ... and the fact [I was] selected was truly a tribute to the whole team."

Even as Fast was nominated and selected for the rank of Maj. Gen in 2003, she maintained her humble attitude, as Maj. Nycki Brooks, Fast's executive officer can attest.

"She's very humble and will tell you that her getting promoted was pure luck, said Brooks, who first worked with Fast when



she was the battalion commander for the 163rd Military Intelligence Battalion on Fort Hood, Texas "But she is incredibly smart, gifted and a great mentor."



Marines return to Iraq for round two



Marine Cpl. Patrick Riley, supply clerk, Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, pounds a steel bar into the ground while making a horseshoe pit. Riley, a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom, deployed to Iraq last year with the First Marine Division. The horseshoe pit is just one of many things being built to improve the morale of the Marines and Sailors deployed to the Al Anbar Province in support of OIF II.

**Story and photo by
Sgt. J.L. Zimmer III**
Marine Wing
Headquarters Squadron 3

AL ANBAR PROVINCE — July 2003 marked the return of the last units from Operation Iraqi Freedom to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif.

Now, less than one year after their return home, the Marines and Sailors of Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3 have returned to provide the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing with logistical support and force protection.

"We are here to prepare and maintain work and living spaces for the Wing Headquarters element," said Lt. Col. Glenn Murray, commanding officer MWHS-3.

Flying across the Atlantic Ocean and touching ground on three separate continents, many of the Marines and Sailors of MWHS-3 are returning veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Sgt. Jonathan B. Davis, nuclear, biological and chemical warfare specialist, MWHS-3, was attached to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marines during Operation Iraqi Freedom and witnessed first hand the reaction of the Iraqi people after they had been liberated.

"The first time I was here, we

were here to topple Saddam Hussein and liberate the people of this country," said the 22-year-old Cleveland, Tenn., native. "Now we are here to stabilize the country and jump-start the people to let them know what it is like to live free and without fear."

The first phase of the war in Iraq saw the use of nearly all of 3rd MAWs fixed-wing and rotary-winged assets to support troops on the ground. This time, only the workhorses of the 3rd MAW will be used.

"We did not bring any tactical air support (F/A-18 Hornets) or any AV-8B Harriers to Iraq this time," Murray said. "We brought everything else, to include CH-46 Sea Knights and CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopters from MCAS Miramar and Marine Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Squadron 1 from Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

"The force here under the 3rd MAW is a compilation of units and personnel from all four Marine Aircraft Wings," he added. "We have Marines from Yuma, Ariz., Okinawa, Japan and New Orleans."

As part of the largest group of Coalition forces to assist in the rebuilding of Iraq since the conflict ended last year, the

Marines and Sailors of MWHS-3 want to do their part.

One of these Marines, Sgt. Doug Harris, signals intelligence analyst with MWHS-3, was based out of Ahmed Al Jaber Air Base, Kuwait, last year and has supported the Wing through his military occupational specialty.

"I provided indications and warnings to the intelligence field of incoming missile launches," said the 34-year-old Bradenton, Fla., native. "This time I am very glad to be out here doing something other than my MOS."

Harris has been part of a group of Marines tasked with installing Hesco security barriers around living quarters and buildings.

"I want to get out there and help out wherever I can," he said.

Sgt. Kenneth E. Farmer, a combat illustrator from Headquarters Marine Corps, feels that the non-traditional purpose of the Marine Corps as an occupational force may not be a bad experience for the Corps.

"I think it is good the Marine Corps is here because it shows we are not just a force in readiness," said the 25-year-old Grants Pass, Ore., native. "If anyone thinks there is a reason to get rid of the Marine Corps, this should help prove that we are an asset to the country."

Finance Soldiers train Iraqi counterparts

Story by Sgt. Christopher Stanis
1st Armored Division Public Affairs Office

BAGHDAD — Soldiers from 1st Armored Division's 8th Finance Battalion, and the 1st Cavalry Division's 15th Finance Bn., conducted a three-day course to give Iraqi Civil Defense Corps members a lesson in "paying for freedom."

"We're training the ICDC on internal pay operations," said Lt. Col. Stan Brown, 8th Finance Bn. Commander.

The ICDC is one facet of Iraq's defense services. It was built from scratch after the fall of the former regime to act as the country's "National Guard."

In the short time the ICDC has been in operation, an officer commissioning ceremony was held and the noncommissioned officer corps was developed.

Providing the ICDC the capability to maintain its own finances is a necessary step on its way to becoming a self-sufficient military organization.

The U.S. finance battalions trained dispersing agents, paymasters and fund certifiers.

A dispersing agent maintains accountability of money for all ICDC troops in a battalion, Brown explained. Paymasters are the finance clerks at the company level. Their job is to ensure every service member in a company gets paid his or her correct salary.

The certifiers monitor the overall transaction of pay throughout a battalion and handle separation-from-duty pay, he continued. ICDC battalion command sergeants major or executive officers will fill the certifier positions.

Before now, pay operations for the ICDC battalions were

conducted by U.S. forces.

The trained pay operators will relieve a workload for approximately seven U.S. Soldiers per ICDC battalion, Brown said.

"(The ICDC soldiers) want to take care of their business," said Spc. Said Choukri, finance specialist with 8th Finance Bn. "And it's better for them to know what is going on."

Originally from Morocco and speaking Arabic as his first language, Choukri served as an instructor and a translator during the training.

Later this month, ICDC pay operators will conduct a "right-seat" ride with their U.S. counterparts to learn more about their assignments and duties. ICDC soldiers

will accompany his or her U.S. counterpart and will conduct transactions under the finance Soldiers' supervision.

A session will be held after the 1AD and 1CD transfer of authority ceremonies, to work out any "bugs" and train additional troops, said Capt. Yolanda Bell, 8th Finance Battalion's

Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment commander.

Capt. Radhi Mageed, 303rd ICDC Bn., received training as a dispersing agent, said the course was informative and useful and the instructors were very professional.

"The lectures were educated but simple and the teachers have experience in what they're teaching," he said.

Additionally to Iraqis taking over pay operations, IDCD will be paid with their own currency, the new Iraqi dinar.

"It makes me proud that we are going to use our own currency," Mageed said. "It makes me feel like all the promises (of a new Iraq) are real."

Overall, the students seemed enthusiastic to learn about pay operations and did very well in class, Bell said.

Though the students seemed to understand financial procedures dur-

ing the class's practical exercises, the real assessment of how well they learned will soon begin, Bell said.

"Once they get out there and start drawing money, that will be the true test," Bell said. "Then we'll know if the training went well."

"It makes me proud that we are going to our own currency. It makes me feel like all the promises (of a new Iraq) are real."

— Capt. Radhi Mageed
303rd Iraqi Civil
Defense Corps Battalion

Operation Starfish helps Iraqi children

Story by TSgt Van Y. Dent
Combined Joint Task Force-7
Chaplain Section

I had the occasion a few days ago to go outside of the gates of our downtown Baghdad compound. I was stopped by a very small child who had a bag of Jolly Rancher candies. He was trying to sell them to me. For some reason I actually asked him how much (I don't know why I did, I hate Jolly Ranchers) and he told me a dollar. I looked at the bag and realized that the bag cost at least 2 dollars. I told him to wait for me, that I had to go into the exchange and get something and I would give him something when I returned. To be perfectly honest, I was hoping he would leave before I returned. As I was waiting to pay for my purchase, I looked out the window and saw him standing right where I had left him. He was doing the little kid in place dance, moving his knees back and forth, but still waiting.

Making my purchase, I took my change and put it in my pocket and went back outside. He stopped his little dance and looked up and smiled. He held up his bag of candy and for some reason my heart melted. As he stood there, I told him to keep his candy, then I reached into my pocket and took out the change that I had just received. I had a \$10 bill and gave it to him. His jaw dropped and then he grabbed me around the knees, (he was really little) held on and started crying. I looked down at this very dirty, extremely tiny little person and I realized I had tears in my eyes, (so much for the un-caring, macho image). I knelt down and patted him on the back and he gave me the strongest hug he could. I don't know if he knew the meaning of what he said next, but I did. He said, "thank you, I love you."

I asked him to come over to the curb and talk to me for a few minutes, I learned that his name was Aaron, (not a very Arabic sounding name) his father was killed before the war, and his mother was killed shortly after the war began. He and some of his friends who were in the same position stayed together at an empty building not far from our complex. There are about 15 kids in a room the size of a small bedroom. They have made it as nice as they can. Cardboard boxes are used for just about everything, from room dividers to tables. I asked him why he didn't go to an orphanage. The look of terror in his eyes was disturbing to say the least. From talking to him and some of the other children, I learned that the orphanages in the past were used for experiments by the Republican Guard, and those who were children of enemies



Photo courtesy of operation Starfish

An Iraqi volunteer helps distribute humanitarian aid to children in Baghdad. He assists Jeffery E. Neumann and Raymond D. LeMoine, two college students who took a year of school to come to Iraq and help provide aid to Iraqis in need. They have delivered hundreds of boxes.

of the state were starved to death. (These are probably, mostly just urban legends, but the kids believe it).

The next day as I was on a bus going to another area. I looked out the window while we were at a stop sign, I saw a few little ones climbing out of a truck of the Romanian Army with a MRE. They sat down behind the truck and were trying to open it with their teeth. It was a cute, and heartbreaking sight. Cute, because they were so tiny trying to open the bag and heartbreaking, because they were trying so hard to get at the food.

Now, why am I boring you with this story, and why would I call it Starfish? Well, the answer to the first part is, we are trying to help these street kids and other needy children by starting a ministry here to at least give them some hope. I and many here who are willing to help are asking that churches and other organizations help us if they are able by having love offerings, ministry monies, or any other activity they can think of that could help raise awareness and/or funds for this cause. We are trying to help them understand that someone does care. I have been purchasing as much as I can here to help them, but one person does have his limits in resources sometimes. If any of you can help in the least, the kids would appreciate it greatly, and if you cannot help financially, then your prayers for

these babies are VERY welcome.

I know a lot of donations have come for the orphanages here, but these children do not benefit from that. Some of these kids aren't orphans; they are just from extremely poor homes.

Now, for those who don't understand the reference to STARFISH, here goes...

After a very stormy night along the south Florida oceanfront, tens of thousands of starfish were washed ashore. The next morning a mother and her son were walking along the beach. As they walked along the boy would periodically stop, pick up a starfish, throw it in the ocean, and say, "there ya go". His mother asked him why he was doing that, he told her he was trying to help save the starfish. The mother told him that there are so many on the beach that throwing one back every now and then would not make any difference, as he reached down and pick up another he told her, "It makes a difference to THIS one".

That's what we would like to do. As we reach out and touch one child, we would like to be able to make a difference to that child.

Thank you for your time. May God bless you and yours.

Please hold any monetary donations until after 15 April, 2004, at that time please contact me at

OP-STARFISH@EXCITE.COM

WISH LIST: I know this list sounds large and expensive, but these are just some of the things needed. Thank You for taking the time to look this list over. All the sizes are for children ages 4-18.

Underwear
Socks
T-shirts
Gloves/mittens
Stocking caps
Sweatshirts
Sweat suits-w/pants
Shoes
Toiletries
Towel sets (towel, wash cloths)
Pre-moistened washcloths
Backpacks with school supplies.
Toys (stuffed animals, soccer balls)

If sending school supplies or equipment, please address it as STARFISH-ALIVE to ensure it gets to the proper organization. If sending other supplies or for questions, please contact OP-STARFISH@EXCITE.COM

Sgt. C. Shawn Jensen
Operation Starfish/ ALIVE
Civil Society Team
CPA/ Baghdad Central
APOAE 09316

Marine heavy helicopters bring beans, bullets and Band-Aids

Story and photo by
Sgt. Nathan K. LaForte
MAG-16 Combat
Correspondent

AL ANBAR PROVINCE, Iraq - Pilots and crews of Marine CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466 began their first flight operations here Feb. 28.

These are the first flight oper-

ations in Iraq to take place for Marine Aircraft Group 16 since its return to the country after the main combat phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

For the squadron, however, this deployment is something new, said Maj. Roger McFadden, executive officer, HMM-466.

"This is the first time [HMM-466] has deployed to Iraq as a squadron," McFadden said.

"We have had personnel who came here before who were part of different units at the time."

MAG-16 returned to Iraq in February and is tasked with the logistics flow for the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force in Western Iraq.

"We bring the Marines the beans, bullets and band-aids," McFadden explained. "Most of the flight operations will originate through here."

The squadron will perform the same operations the flight crews have trained for, said Cpl. Joshua Coale, crew chief and weapons and tactics instructor, HMM-466.

"We can do a wide range of jobs including convoy support, re-supply, heavy lift and even raids," he said. "Because of our range, we can also do border patrol along the Syrian border."

As of now, space is the big issue aboard the air station, McFadden said.

"It will get better, but this is the inflow point of all Wing assets. Because the Army is still here, there is less space for now."

For the time being, the squadron is keeping itself busy conducting area "fans" to get pilots familiar with the area surrounding the air station, McFadden said. The Army still has the official mission, so this allows Marines the time to get to know the area and ensure all planes are in good condition, he added.

"We are still in the process of getting our spaces workable," he stated. "It would've been a real detriment to try and do both at the same time."

When MAG-16 officially assumes control of the area of operations, there are many

obstacles they are prepared to encounter during their time in Iraq.

"There are many hazards that we'll face out here," Coale said. "Things like sand, anti-aircraft missile(s) and small arms fire."

To prepare for these dangers, most of the Marines participated in a new training package called Exercise Desert Talon at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Ariz., which was designed specifically to train 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Marines before this rotation of forces in Iraq.

McFadden said that the exercise has sharpened the flight crews' skills, but time will tell if the training will apply in full.

Regardless, pilots have started flying and crews have started observing the landscape for anything and everything.

"Flying should be pretty much normal, but our 'look out doctrine' has increased," Coale said. "There is a threat out there that keeps us in the windows."

Coale said the pilots and crews need to be ready to assume command of the area of operations from the Army.

"We have to be on our toes," he concluded. "We don't know exactly what to expect, so we have to keep eyes out."



A flight maintenance Marine waves instructions to a CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter to have the pilot begin its taxi down the runway to the take-off point. The Marines are part of Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 466, which began its flight operations in Iraq.

COALITION FORCES CLEAR IRAQI ARMS DUMP

Story and photos by
Jonathan Turner
Information Office MND Southeast

An Nasiriyah -- British and Italian military explosives experts have begun the systematic clearance of a massive arms dump outside the city of An Nasiriyah.

Dangerously unstable ammunition and charges litter the 14 sq km site at Tallil after locals looted it following the conflict last year.

Hundreds of artillery shells were pried apart by the looters, who stole the brass casings to sell for scrap. Several looters died when one shell exploded, setting off a devastating chain reaction.

Major Chris Henson, who is overseeing

the project, said 300 tonnes of ammunition had already been removed from Tallil by the military.

"A particular problem at the moment is the heat," he said. "It can cause some of the shells to leak, and in some cases they can spontaneously explode."

"It will take several weeks to completely clear the site," he said. "First we will remove ammunition that we can recover for the New Iraqi Army, and then we will destroy anything which is too dangerous to move."

Italian explosive experts have also been involved in the operation, helping to clear the site of the most dangerous material and also recording the vast quantities of ammunition stored at Tallil.



WO1 Philip Barne prepares to clear artillery rounds at a massive arms dump outside the city of An Nasiriyah.



British and Italian military explosives experts begin the systematic clearance of a massive arms dump outside the city of An Nasiriyah.

Dog doctor runs one table operation

Story and photos by
Sgt. Brian Stockhoff
204th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD – The Soldiers of the 248th Medical Detachment Veterinary Service Forward have learned to deal with both environmental and communication challenges. Their sole operation table stands outside their living quarters, where it is open to dust and wind. There is currently a plan to upgrade their facilities, but for right now, they make due with what they have.

“Being outside fighting the sand and the wind while keeping it as sterile as we can for the dogs gets a little rough sometimes,” said Spc. Melissa Cress, a medical technician with the Fort Bragg, N.C. based 248th.

Cress, who trained for 9 weeks

at Fort Sams, Houston, said her experience working outside is definitely different. “This is the first time I have worked outside, but it seems to work very well. We haven’t had a whole lot of challenges with the dogs.”

Maj. Scott Bormanis, a veterinary doctor, is the commanding officer of the 248th. As of right now, their clinic is outside and consists of one metal table, supply closets and a wash area. “Currently there is a building being renovated that will become the veterinary clinic for Iraq,” he said.

Cress, from Carson City, Nev., said that on average they see at least one dog a day. “These dogs here are all pretty healthy.” She added that they do get the occasional freak accident though. One dog recently had to get stitches because it got in a fight at the kennel.

Cress said that if a situation arises where a very sterile environment is needed, they just notify the 31st Combat Support Hospital (CSH) and bring the patient over there.

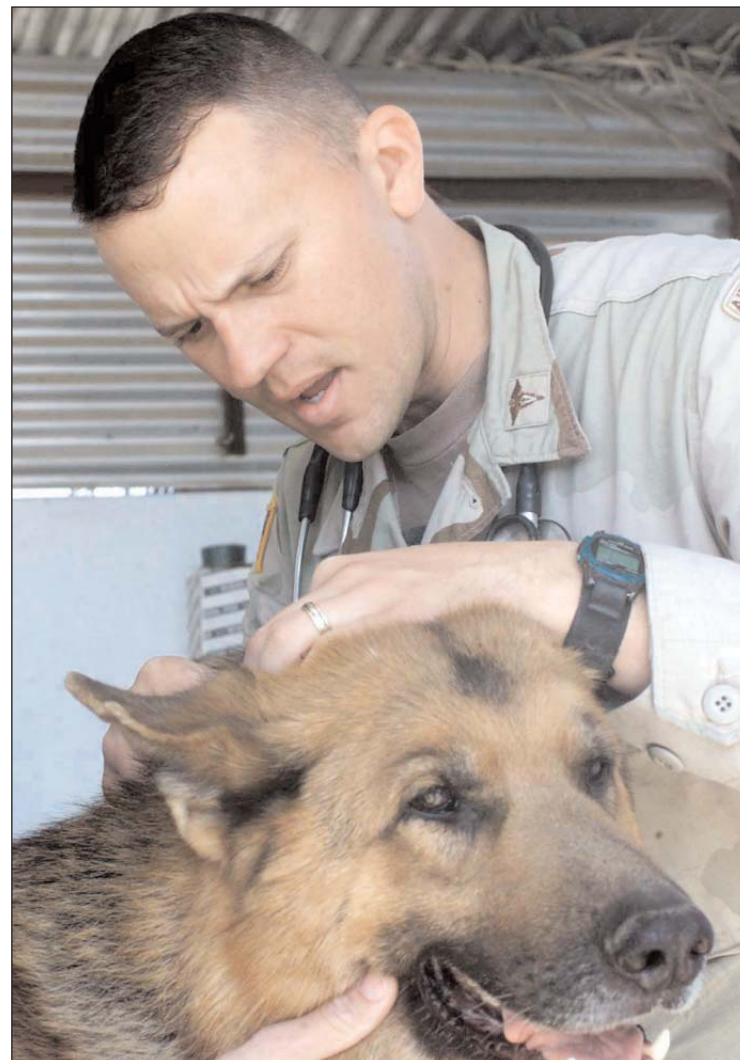
Bormanis said that “they have made arrangements with them (CSH) to help with some more in-depth procedures. If we need to do a surgery, something more than just a minor procedure, one that requires a really clean environment, we could use their facilities for that.” He added that just a few weeks ago the hospital helped them out with some x-rays.

The unit has been in Iraq for four weeks and has noticed the lack of communication between their clinic and the people in the field.

“Part of the problem, that always seems to be the problem with deployments, is the veterinarians don’t know where their customers are and the military dog handlers don’t know where the veterinarians are,” said Bormanis. He added that the 248th just replaced the 72nd Medical Detachment and that they also had problems, even after being here almost a year.

Bormanis said that he just found out that there are two military dogs in Camp Chosen. He added that he never knew the camp existed, let alone that there were two military dogs there that might need to be treated. He said they’re constantly seeking out information about where dogs might be and trying to get the word out that the clinic is here to support them.

Right now, there are 5 other sites throughout Iraq run by veterinarians and veterinarian technicians. They go as far north as Mosul and



Maj. Scott Bormanis, a veterinarian, is the commanding officer for the 248th Medical Detachment Veterinary Service Forward. Here, he evaluates Ex, a German Shepherd military working dog. Ex's handler is Sgt. Eric K. Hooker, a military policeman with the Coalition Provisional Authority's K-9 Unit.



Spc. Melissa Cress, a medical technician with the 248th Medical Detachment Veterinary Service Forward, inspects Benni, a military working dog. Benni's handler is Spc. William Chad Johnson, Coalition Provisional Authority's K-9 Unit. He has handled Benni, ever since the dog came out of training in Sept. 2003.

as far south as Tallil.

Bormanis said that the dangers they have to deal with, with the dogs are the heat, sharp objects and cuts on their feet. He added that gun shots and shrapnel wounds are always a concern.

“The dog handlers are equipped with basic first-aid kits, so they can treat animals on site and stabilize them until they can get them to us,” Bormanis said.

When the handlers bring their dogs to the clinic they are also

responsible to keep the dogs as restrained as possible, said Cress. “The dogs don’t come to the vet without their handler.”

Cress had some advice for the handlers. She said “to have the dogs drink lots of water and to dip the dog’s feet in alcohol because it dissipates quicker and dries cooler so it keeps the dogs cool.

“My favorite part of the job is working with the dogs. I love my job. I think I have the best job in the Army,” said Cress.

Tallil Air Base Religious Worship Services

Worship is at 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Chapel, unless otherwise noted.

Catholic Daily Mass: Tuesday through Friday, 6 p.m.

Vigil Mass: Saturday, 6 p.m.

Confessions: 5-5:30 p.m. in the Blessed Sacrament Room

Sunday Mass: 8 a.m.
POC: Chaplain Martin King at 459-0038

Protestant Traditional: Sunday, 9:30 a.m.

Liturgical Communion: Sunday, 10:30

Gospel Service: Sunday, 11:45 p.m.
Contemporary Choir practice: Sunday, 6 p.m.

Contemporary Worship: Sunday, 7 p.m.
POC: Chaplain Michael Warner at 459-0038

Latter-Day Saints Lay-Led Service: Friday, 8 p.m.

POC: Chapel staff, 459-0038

Jewish Lay-Led Service: Friday, 8 p.m.
POC: Chapel staff, 459-0038

Muslim (LSA Adder Chapel) Prayer: 12:30 p.m. and sunset daily

Bible Studies

Women's: Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. (chapel)

Men's: Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. (chapel annex)

Catholic (RCIA) Thurs, 6:30 p.m. (chapel annex)

Catholic Sunday, 6:30 p.m. (chapel annex) Men and Women

Thursday 7:30 p.m. (chapel annex)

LDS Study Thursday, 7:30 p.m. (chapel annex)

Interrogator saves lives, prevents attacks with intelligence

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Mark Bell
372nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD —Being able to gather information that helps prevent terrorist attacks against the Iraqi people or coalition forces provides a military intelligence Soldier with the motivation to continually improve.

Working behind the scenes, Spc. Daemon Lowell, 22, who calls Virginia Beach home, is a human intelligence collector, more commonly known as an interrogator, assigned to the 1st Armored Division Artillery Combat Team.

Lowell is one of several interrogators assisting Soldiers and paratroopers assigned to the DCT with information needed for their missions in

southern Baghdad.

Lowell said his ability to speak fluent Arabic is very useful in certain situations.

"When I want to get a special point across I don't want the interpreter to have to speak for me," he said.

Because words have greater impact coming from the original source, Lowell said a detainee hearing interrogators speaking Arabic does several things.

"First, it shocks them when they realize that everything they have said to the interpreter was understood by the interrogator — especially when the detainee asks the 'Terp' for help," he said.

"Secondly, when trying to gain the trust of the detainee so that he will trust my word and give me information, speaking Arabic makes him lower his guard because I am not as strange to him anymore."



Spc. Daemon Lowell, an interrogator assigned to the Division Artillery Combat Team, Task Force 1st Armored Division, conducts preventative maintenance checks and services on his section's vehicle.

Although Lowell does not accompany his comrades on operations, his commitment to the mission is just as intense as any infantryman or artilleryman walking the streets of Baghdad, he said.

"The most satisfying part of my job would have to be when a prisoner starts telling all, and I am able to report that information and we are able capture other criminals," he said. "I get such a great feeling inside when people are captured that are trying to halt the progress and development of Iraq and kill my fellow Soldiers."

Lowell said his good feelings are multiplied when information

that he has gathered prevents a terrorist incident or leads to the apprehension of additional insurgents.

The only downside to his job is filling the out stacks of paperwork required after each interrogation, he said.

"The reports are not particularly difficult, but they are tedious and tiresome," said the three-year Army veteran.

Based on his observations of detainees, "bad guys" come from all segments of Iraqi society.

"I have seen people from every walk of life —from the inordinately wealthy businessman to the 'Average Joe' and even an insane man," he said.

However, the detainee's human rights are respected — no matter his or her station in life, he said. The tone of the interrogation depends on the detainee's attitude.

"If they are cooperative and don't give me a hard time, I am a very friendly person," he said. "If they decide that they want to play games, well, we play games too," he said.

Lowell said he gets up every morning knowing he is doing his best to serve his country to the utmost of his ability.

"I will make a positive impact on my country and planet by utilizing my God-given gifts in the proper fashion," he said.

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**CPA/CJTF-7
Military Pay Office
Hours of Operation**

Military pay inquires

Saturday - Thursday
9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Cashier

Everyday except Friday
9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

The pay office is located in the basement at the rear of the CPA palace. It is also located at the Joint Contracting Finance and Resource Management Office near the 31st Combat Support Hospital

1-94 FA's 'Rocketeers' hone skills on Butler Range

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Mark Bell
372nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD — Butler Range near Baghdad had several loud visitors this week as the 1st Armored Division's "King of Battle" flexed some of its biggest muscles during a three-day live-fire exercise.

The 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment, assigned to the 1st Armored Division Artillery Combat Team rolled its inventory of multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS) out to the massive firing range north of Baghdad to finalize their months of training.

The 1-94 FA is operating in southern Baghdad's Al Rashid District as a maneuver battalion patrolling several neighborhoods. The battalion has been deployed since April 2003 and is scheduled to return to



A 1st Battalion, 94th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Armored Division Multiple-Launch Rocket System launcher fires a reduced-range practice rocket at Butler Range.

Strasbourg, Germany, later this spring.

Their Butler Range mission was simple: practice crew skills needed to fire high-velocity training rockets, hit targets accurately and safely and officially qualify the unit's Soldiers as rocketeers.

However, this "simple" mission was complicated

by a sandstorm.

With high winds creating powerful mini-sandstorms, the rocketeers from the "Deep Steel" battalion accomplished their mission in extreme desert conditions. Soldiers sent their rockets down range and on target within minutes of receiving the order to fire.

As walls of sand slowly moved through the training area, clear radio communications became paramount as the carrier and launcher vehicles received data from the fire direction center which was also blinded by flying sand.

"Fire at my command," the voice squawked on the tactical radios linking the launchers with FDC more than a kilometer away.

"Roger, fire at your command over," responded the crew chief from a Bravo Battery rocket launcher.

Moments after the command to fire, "Shot," and "Shot out," was heard – verifying the launching and visual tracking of the rocket as it accelerated into the sky.

"By the time the enemy hears the rocket launching, it's too late," said Sgt. 1st Class Jay Vanderford, battalion operations sergeant. "When they hear it launching from the distance, they already have the rocket on top of them."

With the combination of experienced forward observers, the latest high-tech electronic computers delivering accurate firing data to the launchers, the weather conditions were only a small thought on the rocketeers' minds as they fired.

Vanderford said there were many hours of behind-the-scenes planning and training prior to their range arrival.

"Putting rockets on the target when called upon is why we are in the business we are in," Vanderford said. "Getting that confidence is what the live fire (exercise) is for and they can carry that confidence to the battlefield."

With the ability to annihilate an entire 1,000-meter square area, the MLRS delivers an enormous battlefield

multiplier to the commander, said Lt. Col. Shawn Malone, 1-94 FA commander.

"This MLRS battalion brings an awesome firepower to the division commander which allows him to readily reach out and touch targets deep in the battle space," Malone said.

Malone said the annual section-level live-fire qualifications give his rocketeers the edge over the enemy.

"It maintains our ability to stay proficient in an high-intensity conflict," he said.

Within minutes, a new fire mission was downloaded to computers inside the MLRS vehicles for the next mission.

Crew chiefs checked around their launch vehicle for safety hazards, gunners and drivers were making final adjustments before rotating the rocket platform and making corrections to the rockets' elevations.

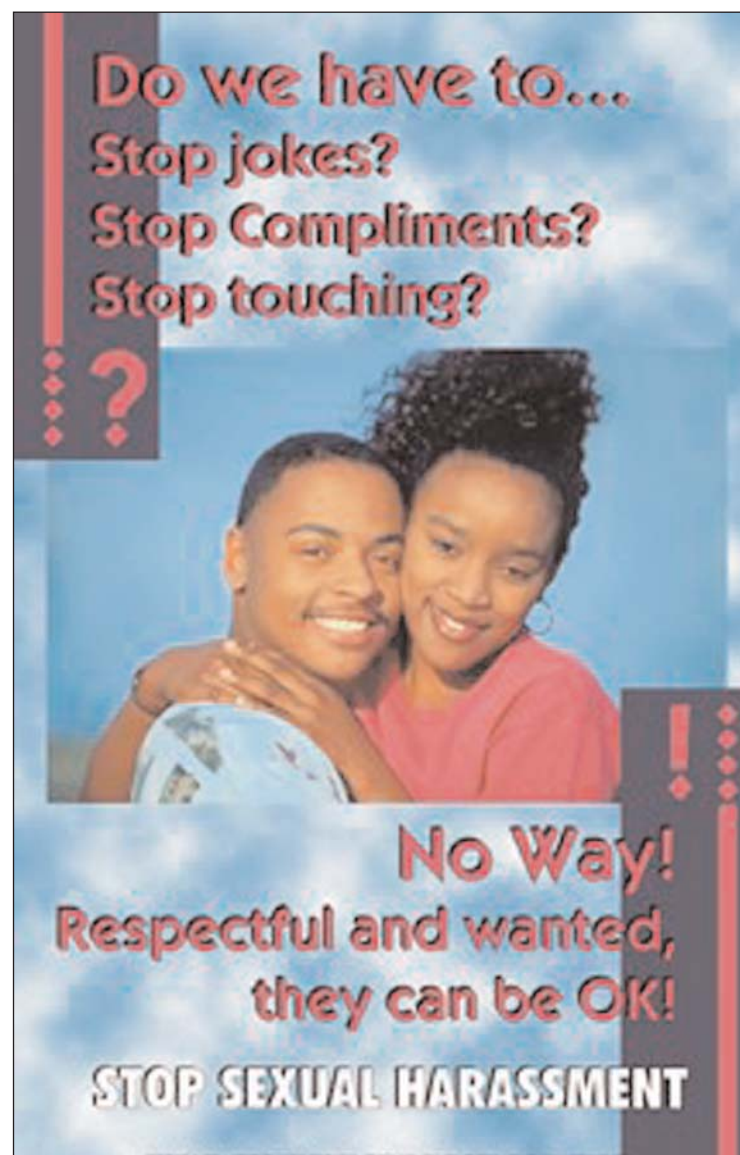
"It's a lot of fun," said Spc. Thomas Graham, 26, a four-year veteran of the MLRS. "The launcher shakes a little bit like a roller coaster, but it's best seeing another launcher firing."

Graham and fellow rocketeers were able to launch 72 rockets during day- and night-time fire missions.

For Spc. Jonathan Darm, 21, from San Antonio, Texas, firing his first rocket was well worth the wait.

"A lot of people said it's loud and violently shakes during the launch," Darm said.

"There's nothing much too it," he continued. There was a little shaking when the rocket fired and a little smell from the exhaust. It was a great experience."



Servicemembers are encouraged to submit articles to the Coalition Scimitar.

E-mail submissions to cpiccmdinfo@baghdadforum.com